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SYNOD OF
Toronto and Kingston!

DISSENT AND COMPLAINT

—OF—

MR. DAVID MITCHELL, AND OTHERS

AGAINST A DECISION OF THE PRESBYTERY OF TORONTO, IN THE MATTER OF

MR. D. J. MACDONNELL, B. D.

Printed Papers for use of Parties and General Assembly.

CASE REFERRED SIMPLICITER, BY SYNOD, TO GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

Papers Numbered from A. to J., Inclusive.

ORILLIA:
PRINTED AT "THE EXPOSITOR" BOOK AND JOB OFFICE.
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A

AT TORONTO, and within Knox Church, there, Thursday, the fourth day of May, one thousand eight hundred and seventy-six years; which time the Synod of Toronto and Kingston met, and was duly constituted.

Inter alia,

The Court proceeded to consider the Dissent and Complaint of Messieurs D. Mitchell and others, against a decision of the Presbytery of Toronto, in the matter of Mr. D. J. Macdonnell, B. D.

Mr. W. Fraser, Convener of the Committee on Bills and Overtures, reported that all the Papers on the case had not been submitted to said Committee,

Whereupon, on motion of Mr. A. Wilson, duly seconded, the Committee on Bills and Overtures were requested to retire from the Court, for the transaction of necessary business, in connection with said Dissent and Complaint.

Mr. R. Torrance read the fourth Report of the Committee on Bills and Overtures, which was received and adopted, so far as the transmission of the papers, connected with the Dissent and Complaint of Messieurs D. Mitchell and others was concerned.

The Synod then proceeded to consider said Dissent and Complaint.

The parties in the case were called, when there compeared Mr. David Mitchell along with those adhering to his Dis-

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sent and Complaint,—and the Presbytery of Toronto, represented by Principal Caven, D.D., Professor W. Maclaren, and Mr. J. M. King, M.A.

The papers in the case were read, comprising, (1.) Dissent and Complaint of Messieurs D. Mitchell and others, with reasons. (2.) Answers of Presbytery to reasons. (3.) Minutes of Presbytery bearing on the whole case. (4.) Statements and communications of Mr. D. J. Macdonnell. (5.) Reports and Minutes of Committee appointed to deal with Mr. Macdonnell, and (6.) Sermon, along with explanations of Mr. Macdonnell, as they appeared in the *Daily Globe* of the Fifth November last.

This last document was held as read.

The hour of adjournment having come, the Synod adjourned to meet at half-past seven o'clock P. M., and was closed with the benediction.

Extracted by JOHN GRAY, M.A., *Synod Clerk.*

And on the same day and in the same place, the Synod met and was constituted.

Inter alia, the Synod resumed consideration of Dissent and Complaint of Messieurs D. Mitchell and others, interrupted by the adjournment at six o'clock P.M.

After reasoning, it was moved by Mr. A. Wilson, seconded by Mr. W. Bennett, and agreed to, That the the following recommendation of the Committee on Bills and Overtures be adopted :—

"That, because of the short time now at the disposal of "this meeting of Synod, and the importance of the matter "now introduced the Committee recommend (1.) That the "Dissent and Complaint be transmitted to the General Assem- "bly simpliciter, with consent of parties. (2.) That parties be "instructed to have all papers in printed form, without delay."

Parties, when asked, having expressed their assent to the foregoing recommendation, were cited apud acta, to appear before the General Assembly.

It was decided that the reference be for judgment.

The Clerk was instructed to retain all the papers connected with the case, to get as many copies as were required printed for the parties at their expense, as well as to give certified printed copies of the papers to either party, when required.

Principal Snodgrass, D.D., and Mr. A. Wilson, were appointed Commissioners to explain the reference before the General Assembly.

Extracted from the Records of the Synod of Toronto and Kingston, of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, by

JOHN GRAY, M.A., *Synod Clerk.*

B

At Toronto, and within the lecture room of Knox Church there, the second of May, eighteen hundred and seventy-six, the Presbytery of Toronto met and was constituted, &c.

Inter alia, the Presbytery called for report of committee appointed at last meeting to confer with Mr. Macdonnell. Accordingly the convener of said committee, Professor McLaren, read a report, and stated thereafter that Messieurs David Mitchell and William Mitchell had entered their dissent from the recommendation contained therein. It was moved by Mr. Wm. Mitchell, seconded by Mr. Smith, and unanimously agreed, that said report, together with the motion submitted in committee by Mr. David Mitchell and seconded by Mr. William Mitchell, be printed forthwith for the use of members. It was then moved and agreed that the Presbytery adjourn to meet again at 3 P. M.

Extracted from Presbytery Minutes,

R. MONTEATH, *Presbytery Clerk.*

Same day and place, at 3 P. M., the Presbytery of Toronto met again, according to adjournment, and was constituted, &c.

Inter alia, the Presbytery resumed report of the committee appointed to confer with Mr. Macdonnell. It was moved by Principal Caven, and seconded by Mr. Pringle, That the Presbytery express a general approval of the report, and adopt its recommendation. In amendment it was moved by Mr. David Mitchell, and seconded by Mr. William Mitchell, That considering all the circumstances the matter now before the Presbytery be allowed to drop. On the Roll being called, 34 voted for the motion, and 14 for the amendment. The motion was accordingly declared carried; and the Presbytery decided accordingly. From this decision Mr. David Mitchell dissented in his own name, and in the name of all who might adhere, and protested for leave to complain to the Synod for reasons to be

afterwards given in. To the above protest and complaint Messrs. Wm. Mitchell, Macdonnell, E. D., McLaren and Macgillivray adhered and craved extracts.

The Presbytery then adjourned to meet in the same place the following day at 9 A. M., with leave of the Synod.

Extracted from Presbytery Minutes,

R. MONTEATH, *Presbytery Clerk.*

At Toronto, and within the lecture room of Knox Church there, the third of May eighteen hundred and seventy-six, at 9 A. M., the Presbytery of Toronto, with leave of the Synod, met again, according to adjournment, and was constituted, &c.

Inter alia, Mr. David Mitchell produced and read the following as his reasons of dissent and complaint in regard to the decision come to the previous evening in the case of Mr. Macdonnell :—

1.—That the Rev. D. J. Macdonnell, by withdrawing his former statement, and substituting the present one in its place, has complied with the committee's expressed desire, which was either to answer their proposed question by a simple affirmative, or to give a written statement of his own.

2.—That Mr. Macdonnell's new statement does conta. a desirable adhesion to the Confession of Faith on the doctrine of the eternity of future punishment.

3.—That the last clause of the statement, as expressed, cannot on a fair interpretation of its meaning be said to modify the adhesion which Mr. Macdonnell gives to the doctrine in question.

4.—That Mr. Macdonnell, in the peculiar position in which he has been placed, has done everything within reason to meet the requirements of the Presbytery on the point at issue.

5,—That further proceedings in this matter will only tend to aggravate the unforeseen consequences which have resulted from the sermon preached by Mr. Macdonnell.

The foregoing reason were adhered to by Mr. Carmichael

of King, Mr. McLaren, Mr. Macgillivray, Mr. Croll, ministers; and Mr. William Mitchell and Mr. David Johnston, elders.

The following reasons of dissent were also produced and read by Mr. Macdonnell in his own name, viz.: It is unreasonable to demand that assent to a doctrine should be stated in the words of *others, when those words do not so exactly* express the attitude of the mind towards a grave and difficult question, such as that under consideration.

A committee was appointed, consisting of Professor McLaren, Principal Caven, Mr. King and Mr. Robb, to prepare answers to the various reasons above given; said answers to be submitted to the Presbytery at a subsequent diet.

Also, on motion made by Mr. Pringle, Principal Caven, Professor McLaren and Mr. King, were appointed to represent the Presbytery before the Synod in this matter.

Extracted from minutes of Presbytery,

R. MONTEATH, *Presbytery Clerk*,

N.B.—Proposed change by Mr. Macdonnell in his reason of Dissent. 1. For words of *others*, words of '*a committee.*' 2. Between *exactly* and *express*, insert '*as ones own.*'—J. G., *S. C.*

At Toronto, and within the Lecture Room of Knox Church there, the fourth of May, at nine A.M., the Presbytery of Toronto met again according to adjournment, with leave of the Synod, and was constituted, etc.

Inter alia, the Committee appointed yesterday to prepare answers to reasons of Dissent and Complaint in the case of Mr. Macdonnell, submitted answers thereanent, which, on motion made were unanimously adopted. The following are the answers just named :—

ANSWERS TO

Reasons of Dissent by Rev. David Mitchell, and others.

I The Presbytery regrets to find in the first reason of dissent a misstatement of fact. The Committee did not request Mr. Macdonnell to give as alternative, "a written statement of his own," but a statement equivalent to a simple affirmative to the question.

II. Inasmuch as the form of adhesion given to the Confession of Faith, may very seriously modify its meaning, as will be shown in answer to the following reasons of dissent, it cannot be said to be "a desirable adhesion to the Confession of Faith."

III. That the clause referred to in this reason, viz: "expressed as it is almost entirely in the language of Scripture," is, in the case of *simple adhesion*, entirely unnecessary; and it can be fairly interpreted only in the light (1) of Mr. Macdonnell's declinature to give an affirmative answer to the question as proposed by the Committee, (2) of his persistent adherence to this form of expression in his *statements*, and (3) of his interpretations of Scripture phraseology, as given in his sermon and in his first statement to the Presbytery with its accompanying *notes*,—interpretations which have never been disavowed. It is but necessary to refer to the expressed preference for "everlasting punishment" over the phrase "eternal torments," as found in the Confession of Faith;

sustained by an assumed meaning of the Greek word *aionios*, which, as stated in Presbytery, he holds to signify, "for ages of ages, possibly endless, possibly not,"—an interpretation which is more fully explained in the *notes* to his first statement. In the light of the above considerations, the reference to the Scripture in this connection, if allowed, would obviously secure for Mr. Macdonnell the same liberty in interpreting the language of the Confession of Faith, as he claims in interpreting the same language, when used in the Holy Scriptures. This adhesion therefore to the Confession of Faith becomes clearly nothing more than a modified adhesion.

IV. The Presbytery must disclaim all responsibility for the peculiarity of Mr. Macdonnell's position referred to in this reason of dissent, nor have they been wanting in sympathy for Mr. Macdonnell, under his perplexities; having so directed their proceedings as to allow him every opportunity of having his views brought into harmony with the doctrine of the Church. They have, moreover, done everything in their power, consistent with their obligations to maintain the truth, to give Mr. Macdonnell relief, by making provision in the finding appealed against, for all such difficulties and perplexities as do not imply non-belief of the doctrine. The Presbytery are willing to believe that Mr. Macdonnell has been anxious to meet their requirements; they have to note, however, that Mr. Macdonnell, although corresponding with the Committee by written communications, declined to meet with the Committee appointed to confer with him, when they were not without hope, that interviews with him might have been useful in the solution of the case. The Presbytery would add that in their judgment, Mr. Macdonnell's position in his last statement, as must indeed be evident from the answer to the foregoing reason of dissent, remains essentially unchanged.

V. The Presbytery have only to say that in their whole proceedings in this matter, they have endeavoured to walk in the path of duty, leaving consequences to Him in whose hand all issues are.

ANSWER TO

Mr. Macdonnell's Reason of Dissent.

If the attitude of Mr. Macdonnell's mind towards the doctrine of the Church were such as the Presbytery could allow, Mr. Macdonnell would have been able to give a categorical affirmative to the question formulated by the Committee, or a statement equivalent thereto. And that so far as expressing assent to a doctrine in the words of others is concerned, the difficulty is not greater than in giving a categorical assent to the questions proposed by the Church at ordination.

It was then moved and agreed to, That the Sermon preached by Mr. Macdonnell, which originated the process, together with his verbal explanations thereon, as reported in the *Globe* of November 5, 1875, and also the minutes of the Committee appointed to confer with Mr. Macdonnell, be transmitted to the Synod's committee on Bills and Overtures; and that all parties be cited *apud acta* to appear before the Synod.

Extracted from minutes of Presbytery.

R. MONTEATH, *Presbytery Clerk.*

D

At Toronto, and within the lecture room of Knox Church there, the fourth of November eighteen hundred and seventy-five, at 11 A. M., the Presbytery of Toronto met *pro re nata*, and was constituted, &c.

The circular of the Moderator, addressed to the various members of Presbytery, and calling the present meeting, was read, of which the following is a true copy :—

"TORONTO, 23rd October, 1875.

DEAR SIR,—Having received a Requisition from members of the Presbytery of Toronto, requesting me, as Moderator of the Presbytery, 'to call a meeting of Presbytery, to take into consideration the doctrine of a sermon, said to have been preached by the Rev. D. J. Macdonnell, in St. Andrew's Church, on the 26th ult., and what action may be necessary there anent,' I accordingly call a *pro re nata* meeting of Presbytery for that purpose, to be held in the usual place, the Lecture Room of Knox Church, Toronto, on Thursday, the 4th of November ensuing, at 11 o'clock A. M. I am, yours sincerely,

(Signed) ALEXANDER TOPP,

Moderator of Presbytery."

On motion made by Mr. Reid, seconded by Mr. Dick, the Moderator's conduct, in calling this meeting, was unanimously approved of.

The Presbytery then proceeded to consider the matter set forth in the foregoing circular. Principal Caven was heard on behalf of the Requisitionists. Mr. Macdonnell was also heard on his own behalf. It was then moved by Professor McLaren, and seconded by Mr. Smith, That the Presbytery, having had their attention called to the teaching of a sermon said to have been preached by Rev. D. J. Macdonnell in St. Andrew's Church, Toronto, on the 26th September last, and having heard his explanations in reference thereto, agree to appoint a committee to confer with him, and to report at a subsequent sederunt. In amendment it was moved by Mr. Mitchell, and seconded by Dr. Jennings, Whereas, from the explanations given by Mr. Macdonnell, the doctrine of the sermon in question is considerably modified; whereas, from the sincere and loyal at-

tachment given this day by Mr. Macdonnell to the government and practice of the church, we have good reason to feel confidence in him; *Resolved*, that the matter in discussion be now dismissed. The amendment and the motion were successively put to the vote, when 7 voted for the amendment and 21 for the motion. The motion was therefore declared carried, and agreeably to the terms thereof the following were appointed a committee for the purpose specified in said motion, viz.: Principal Caven, Professors Gregg and McLaren, Mr. King, Mr. Reid, Mr Robb, Mr. Carmichael of King, Mr. Aitken, Mr. Dick, Mr. Breckenridge, Mr. Smith and the Moderator; Professor McLaren to be convener.

The Presbytery then adjourned to meet again in the same place at half-past seven o'clock.

Same day and place, at 7:30 P. M., the Presbytery of Toronto met again, according to adjournment, and was constituted, &c.

Professor McLarren, as convener of the committee appointed at the foregoing diet, submitted and read a report from said committee, of which the following is a copy:—"The committee, having conferred at length with the Rev. D. J. Macdonnell, B. D., finds as follows: while admitting the general correctness of the report of the sermon, Mr. Macdonnell stated that there were some omissions and some alterations, the general effect of which was to lead to the supposition that he had declared his acceptance of the doctrine of the final restoration of all, and denied the eternity of future punishment, whereas he had simply stated the difficulty he had in arriving at any conclusion. 2. Mr. Macdonnell stated that he felt it was unwise to speak in a way not in harmony with the Confession of Faith on this particular subject, when his own mind was in a state of perplexity, and expressed his regret for doing so. 3. Mr. Macdonnell engaged, while seeking further light on this subject, not to contravene the teaching of the Confession of Faith on this point in his public ministry, and expressed his willingness

to state his views on this matter to the Presbytery when called upon. And further, in view of the above explanations and statements, the committee beg to recommend to the Presbytery for adoption the following deliverance: That the Presbytery, taking the premises into consideration, agrees that time be granted to Mr. Macdonnell to consider more carefully the question involved, in the hope that his views may soon be brought into complete harmony with those of the church. But the Presbytery, recognizing the fundamental importance of the doctrine of the eternity of future punishment as taught in the Canfession of Faith; and the necessity of maintaining in its integrity the church's testimony thereto, requires Mr. Macdonnell to report to this court as to his argument with the teaching of the Confession on the doctrine in question not later than the last regular meeting before the next General Assembly."

On motion made by Mr. Mitchell, the foregoing report was received.

It was then moved by Principal Caven, and seconded by Mr. King, That the foregoing report be adopted, which motion was carried unanimously, and the report was adopted accordingly. The diet was then closed with the benediction.

Extracted from minutes of Presbytery,

R. MONTEATH, *Presbytery Clerk.*

At Toronto, and within the lecture room of Knox Church there, the fourth of April eighteen hundred and seventy-six, the Presbytery of Toronto met and was constituted, &c.

Inter alia, Pursuant to a resolution of Presbytery, adopted on the fourth of November last, there was now produced and read a paper from Mr. D. J. Macdonnell, reporting as to his agreement with the teaching of the Confession of Faith on the doctrine of future punishment. Whereupon it was moved by Mr. D. Mitchell, and seconded by Mr. W. E. McKay, That

the Presbytery accept the paper of the Rev. D. J. Macdonnell as a sufficient answer in response to the requirement that he should report to the Presbytery his views on the subject of eternal punishment at this meeting of Presbytery. In amendment it was moved by Professor McLaren, and seconded by Mr. James Brown, That Mr. Macdonnell's paper be referred to a committee to report thereon to a subsequent meeting of Presbytery. On the amendment and the motion being put successively to the vote, 17 voted for the amendment, and 9 for the motion. It was then declared that the amendment carried,—and agreeably to its terms, the following were appointed a committee to consider Mr. Macdonnell's paper and report thereen, viz.: Professor McLaren (convener), Principal Caven, Mr. Carmichael of King, Mr. Aitken, Mr. Robb, Mr. D. Mitchell, Mr. Breckenridge and the Moderator, together with Hon. J. McMurrich and Mr. James Brown; said committee to report to next ordinary meeting, which was appointed to be held in the same place on the eighteenth current, at eleven A. M. The paper of Mr. Macdonnell, above referred to, was ordered to be kept *in retentis*.

Extracted from minutes of Presbytery,

R. MONTEATH, *Presbytery Clerk.*

E

STATEMENT OF MR. D. J. MACDONNELL.

To the Moderator and Members of the Presbytery of Toronto.

FATHERS AND BRETHREN,—At a meeting of this Presbytery, held on the 4th November, 1875, a resolution was passed requiring me to report as to my agreement with the teaching of the Confession of Faith on the doctrine of future punishment not later than the last regular meeting before the General Assembly. In accordance with the terms of said resolution, I desire now to submit the following statement:—

1. So far as the language of the Confession of Faith on this point is concerned, I find that it is almost entirely borrowed from Scripture, and I declare my adhesion to it, understanding the phrase "eternal torments" to have the same meaning as "everlasting punishment" in Matt. xxv.

2. While I do not consider myself debarred by the teaching of Scripture from *hoping* that God may in some way put an end to sin and suffering, I am satisfied that it is not a part of the message with which I am entrusted as a minister of the Gospel to hold out any hope of future pardon to those who have in this life rejected Christ. "Now is the accepted time." What God *may* do hereafter is apparently not among the things revealed, or intended to be known.

I hope that this statement will prove satisfactory.

I am, fathers and brethren,

Yours respectfully,

D. J. MACDONNELL.

NOTES ON STATEMENT SUBMITTED TO PRESBYTERY.

1.—I substitute the words "everlasting punishment," or rather the Greek words *kolasin aionion* (Matt. xxv. 46) for "eternal torments," because the former is in Scripture applied to the punishment of wicked men and the latter is not. There is an obvious distinction between "punishment" and "torments."

2.—The word *aionios* may, of course, mean *absolutely endless*. I do not deny that there is strong ground for assigning to it that meaning in the passage quoted. But it has often in Scripture a more limited signification, and if there is room for even a shadow of doubt as to whether the Saviour intended to teach that evil would be endless, there is room to "hope," however vaguely, that God may in some way put an end to sin and suffering.

F

MINUTES OF PRESBYTERY ANENT STATEMENT OF MR. MACDONNELL.

At Toronto, and within the lecture room of Knox Church there, the eighteenth of April eighteen hundred and seventy-six, the Presbytery of Toronto met and was constituted, &c.

Inter alia, the Committee on Mr. Macdonnell's paper submitted a report on said paper, together with notes on the same, which had been handed in from Mr. Macdonnell. The report and the notes were severally read by the Convener. Thereafter it was moved and agreed, That said documents be printed, as also the paper aforesaid, for the use of members, and that the Presbytery adjourn to meet again and deliberate thereon at 4 p. m.

Same day and place, at 4 p. m. the Presbytery of Toronto met again, according to adjournment, and was constituted &c.

On motion duly made, it was agreed, That the recent paper of Mr. Macdonnell, and the report of the committee thereon, with Mr. Macdonnell's appended notes, should be read again and accordingly they were read again by Professor McLaren.

Thereafter, on motion made by Mr. Meikle, it was agreed to receive the report, and to thank the committee for their diligence in connnection therewith.

It was also moved and agreed, That the several findings in the committee's report be taken up and dealt with *seriatim*, Accordingly the first finding in said report was read.

Whereupon it was moved by Principal Caven, and seconded by Mr. D. Mitchell, That the Presbytery adopt the conclusion reached in the first part of the report, viz: that Mr. Macdonnell's statement of his views on the doctrine of future punishment cannot be accepted as satisfactory by the Presbytery.

The hour for adjournment having now arrived, it was moved and agreed to continue in session for half an hour, with a view to dispose of the motion before the house.

Thereafter it was moved in amendment by Mr. William Mitchell, and seconded by Mr. Carmichael, of Markham, That the Presbytery, considering all the circumstances, accept Rev. D. J. Macdonnell's statement, with the subsequent notes, and that the matter be now allowed to drop. When the votes were about to be taken, a member of Court demanded that the roll be called; and the roll was called accordingly. It was then found that 3 votes were recorded for the amendment, and 28 for the motion. The motion being thus carried, the same was declared to be the mind of the Presbytery. The Presbytery then adjourned to meet again at eight P.M.

Same day and place, at 8 P.M., the Presbytery of Toronto met again, according to adjournment, and was constituted, &c.

Inter alia, The Presbytery proceeded to consider the second finding in the Committee's Report anent the paper of Mr. Macdonnell's. It was moved by Professor McLaren, and seconded by Mr. Smith, Resolved, in reference to the second part of the report, that in the judgment of the Presbytery Mr. Macdonnell's statement embodies a deviation from the teaching of Scripture and the received doctrine of the church, which this court is not at liberty to allow in one of its ministers.

In amendment, it was moved by Mr. Wm. Mitchell, seconded by Mr. Carmichael, of Markham, That the second finding in the Committee's Report be not adopted.

In further amendment it was moved by Principal Caven, seconded by Mr. Gemmell, That the second finding be passed over in the meantime, and that the Presbytery proceed to consider the third finding.

At this stage Professor McLaren, with the leave of his seconder, withdrew his motion. Also, Mr. Mitchell, with leave of his seconder, withdrew his amendment.

There remained therefore only the amendment of Principal Caven, which was put to the house, and carried unanimously.

The Presbytery then proceeded to the third finding in the Committee's Report, and on motion made by Principal Caven, it was agreed to appoint a Committee to confer with Mr. Macdonnell, with the view of ascertaining whether there be any prospect of his sentiments being brought into harmony with those of the church,—to report to the Presbytery at a later period of the diet. The following Committee were then appointed, viz: Professor McLaren, Convener; Principal Caven, Mr. David Mitchell, Mr. Carmichael, of King, Mr. Reid, Mr. Robb and Mr. King, ministers; Hon. J. McMurrich, Mr. Jas. Brown, and Mr. Wm. Mitchell, elders.

After being absent some time, the Committee returned and reported through their Convener, Professor McLaren, that they had not been able to arrive at any definite conclusion, and they asked leave to sit again, and that Dr. Topp, the Moderator, be added to their number. Said application was unanimously granted, and the Moderator was also added to the Committee.

It was then moved and agreed that the next ordinary meeting be appointed to be held in the same place on the first Tuesday of May, at 11 a. m. Closed with the benediction.

Extracted from minutes of Presbytery,

R. MONTEATH, *Presbytery Clerk.*

G (1)

REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF PRESBYTERY ON STATEMENT OF MR. MACDONNELL.

The Committee appointed to consider and report to the Presbytery upon the statement handed in by Rev. D. J. Macdonnell, respecting his agreement with the teaching of the Confession of Faith on the doctrine of Future Punishment, met and considered the same, and having requested and obtained an interview with Mr. Macdonnell, the precise meaning of certain portions of his statement was more definitely elicited. At a meeting of the Committee held last evening, a paper, herewith appended, was handed in from Mr. Macdonnell, containing certain notes on the statement submitted to Presbytery. Your Committee now beg to submit the following report:—

Mr. Macdonnell's paper, without accepting the doctrine of future punishment as taught in the Confession of Faith, declares a qualified adhesion to the language in which it is embodied. In dealing with this document, in the light cast upon it by Mr. Macdonnell's explanations, verbal and written, three questions were considered, viz:—1. Does Mr. Macdonnell's paper embody a statement of views which the Presbytery should accept as satisfactory? 2. If there is indicated in said paper a deviation from the received doctrine of the church, is it of such a nature as can be tolerated in one holding the office of a gospel minister? 3. What action should be taken by the Presbytery in the premises? In dealing with the first question, your Committee observe that the point raised by Mr. Macdonnell's sermon of last September, out of which the difficulty arose, has respect to the *duration* of future punishment. The view which that discourse seemed to countenance is that at some future period, sin and punishment shall come to an end, and all God's intelligent moral creatures be restored to the Divine favour. Those who maintain this view necessarily hold that such expressions, as "everlasting punishment," occurring in Scripture, do not mean endless punishment, but a punishment which is of limited duration. The bearing of this upon the meaning of Mr. Macdonnell's statement will be apparent. Your Committee feel that they cannot recommend the Presbytery to accept Mr. Macdonnell's statement as satisfactory, for the following reasons, viz.:—

1. He does not declare his adhesion to the doctrine of future punishment as taught in the Confession of Faith, in the well understood and historical meaning of its language. He says that the language of the Confession on this point is almost entirely borrowed from Scripture," and it would appear that it is only when construed in the manner in which he is accustomed to construe Scripture that he declares his adhesion to it. For in reference to the well understood phrase "eternal torments," which he says is not in Scripture applied to the punishment of wicked men, he accepts it as having the same meaning as "everlasting punishment," in Matt. xxv. Did Mr. Macdonnell accept the doctrine of future punishment, as taught in the Confession of Faith, according to the ordinary and historical meaning of the terms, this explanation would be unnecessary.

2. Mr. Macdonnell in his statement does not define in what sense he undstands the phrase "eternal punishment" which he substitutes for "eternal torments." This omission is the more unfortunate, after the grave doubts excited by his sermon respecting the meaning which he must attach to such Biblical language. Probably few Universalists would object to the eternity of future punishments, if they were only allowed to understand eternal punishments as having the same meaning as they attach to "everlasting punishment" in Matthew xxv.

3. It is evident from the concluding portion of his statement that Mr. Macdonnell does not understand "Everlasting Punishment," in Matt. xxv., in the sense in which that phrase has usually been understood in the Christian Church, as denoting a punishment which is strictly eternal. If God's Word teaches the endless duration of the punishment of the wicked, it necessarily excludes all hope of their final salvation, but Mr. Macdonnell holds "Everlasting Punishment" in such a sense that he can declare, "I do not consider myself debarred by the teaching of Scripture, from *hoping* that God may in some way put an end to sin and suffering." And when notwithstanding the distinct Scripture announcement that the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment, Mr Macdonnell can write, "What God may do hereafter is apparently not among the

things revealed, or intended to be known." It is evident that he holds "Everlasting Punishment" in Matt. xxv., in a sense different from what these words convey to the ordinary reader, and altogether unlike that in which they have been generally understood by the christian church. It is manifest that the word everlasting is not used by him in his statement in its ordinary meaning, but rather as equivalent to a meaning which it is assumed the original Greek *aionion*, may bear. This is indeed distinctly recognized, in the appended notes herewith submitted, where he says, "I substituted the words "Everlasting Punishment," or rather the Greek words, *kolasin aionion* (Matt. xyv., 46,) for "eternal torments," etc.

4. Your Committee have only to add that the view of the meaning of the paper to which they were led by its structure, was fully confirmed by Mr. Macdonnell's personal explanations so that no room is left for doubt that the statement covers and was intended to cover a deviation from the doctrine of the Confession of Faith and the Creeds of Christendom, and from what your Committee believes is the teaching of the Holy Scriptures.

Your Committee therefore regret to say that they have been led unanimously to the conviction that Mr. Macdonnell's statement should not be accepted by the Presbytery as satisfactory.

II. In reference to the second question, your Committee cannot regard the position taken by Mr. Macdonnell, viz: that the Scriptures do not reveal the proper eternity of the punishment of the wicked, but leave it open for us to hope that all may be ultimately saved, as one of those minor deviations from the truth which the Presbytery is at liberty to overlook, in one of its ministers.

Your Committee on the contrary, believe that the eternal punishment of the wicked is a doctrine clearly taught in the Holy Scriptures, not merely by the phrase "Everlasting Punishment," and parallel expressions applied to the doom of the ungodly, but by a great variety of representations, which should leave no "room for even a shadow of doubt," in the minds of those who bow to the authority of God's Word.

Your Committee cannot but regard the view which Mr. Macdonnell cherishes, as tending to weaken the sanctions of God's law, and detract from the power of those appeals by which the gospel is urged upon men; and they cannot but view as perilous to the best interests of mankind, any teaching which is fitted to lessen the weight of those awful sanctions, by which God has enforced the precepts of His Law, and the invitations of His mercy.

Your Committee also regard Mr. Macdonnell's position as inconsistent with the acceptance in its integrity of that system of doctrine which is embodied in the standards of the Presbyterian Church in Canada.

Your Committee may add that it is not competent for any of the subordinate courts of the church, even to entertain the question of granting, by their own authority, a relaxation of the terms of Ministerial Communion.

Your Committee therefore are of opinion that Mr. Macdonnell's statement embodies a deviation from the teaching of the Scriptures, and the received doctrine of the Church, which the Presbytery is not at liberty to allow in one of its ministers.

III. In reference to the third question your Committee recommend the Presbytery to appoint a Committee to deal with Mr. Macdonnell, with a view of ascertaining whether there is any prospect of his sentiments being brought into harmony with those of the Church, and to report to the Presbytery at a subsequent sederunt.

All which is respectfully submitted.

WM. MCLAREN, *Convener.*

G (2)

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE APPOINTED TO CONFER WITH REV. D. J. MACDONNELL.

The Committe having regard to the great importance of the doctrine of the Church on Future Punishment, and the necessity of the Church's testimony to it being unequivocally borne, in opposition whether to the idea of Restoration, or to that of the annihilation of the wicked, feels that no decision of this case can be satisfactory in which that doctrine shall be in any way compromised.

The committee is also very desirous that no injustice shall be done to Mr. Macdonnell in imputing to him any modification of opinion—any attitude towards the standards which he does not himself acknowledge as truly representing his position.

With regard to the doctrine concerned, or indeed any doctrine, the following attitudes of mind may be clearly distinguished: (*a.*) That of unembarrassed acceptance. (*b.*) That of rejection. (*c*) That of suspense; in which the evidence *for* and the evidence *against* seem so nearly balanced, that it is felt to be impossible to decide one way or another.—(*d.*) That in which the evidence for a doctrine is seen to be of such weight that the mind, notwithstanding difficulties, whether in connection with the evidence, or in connection with the relation of the doctrine to other doctrines, really embraces it as true.

The Committee having respect to certain verbal statements, made by Mr. Macdonnell to the Presbytery, deemed it right, in order to remove all possibility of misconception regarding his views, to endeavor to ascertain whether the position last indicated, is that which he occupies towards the Church's doctrine on Future Punishment.

In order to make this point certain, the Committee agreed to put to Mr. Macdonnell the following question, namely: "Whatever difficulties or perplexities you may have in connection with the doctrine of the Eternity of the Punishment of the Wicked, are you prepared to signify your adhesion to the teaching of the Confession of Faith regarding it?"

This question and the foregoing portion of this report was sent to Mr. Macdonnell with the intimation that in the event of his seeing his way to give a simple affirmative to the question or a statement equivalent thereto, the Committee would recommend to the Presbytery that the proceedings in the matter should be allowed to terminate.

This morning the Committee received the following amended statement from Mr. Macdonnell, in favour of which he asked leave to have all previous statements to be withdrawn: "In regard to the Eternity of "Future Punishment I have arrived at no conclusion at variance with "the doctrine of the Church. I do not conceal that I have difficulties

"and perplexities on the subject; but I adhere to the teaching of the "Confession of Faith in regard to it, expressed at it is almost entirely "in the language of Scripture."

Your Committee would be prepared to recommend the acceptance of this document were it not for the last clause, namely, "expressed as it is almost entirely in the language of Scripture,") which is susceptible of a meaning which seriously modifies the adhesion declared.

With the view of securing, if possible, the withdrawal of the clause, the Committee requested an interview with Mr. Macdonnell, but failed to obtain it. The Committee believing that there should be no misunderstanding on this point, beg to recommend to the Presbytery that Mr. Macdonnell be requested either to withdraw the last clause of this amended statement, or to give a direct answer to the question embodied in the foregoing portion of this report.

In the event of this clause being withdrawn or a simple affirmative being given to the question, the Committee recommend that the proceedings in the matter be allowed to terminate.

All which is is respectfully submitted.

WM. McLAREN, *Convener.*

TORONTO, 2nd May, 1876.

Moved by Rev. D. Mitchell, seconded by Mr. Wm. Mitchell,—"That the statement from Rev. D. J. Macdonnell, herewith submitted, be considered satisfactory, inasmuch as it does not necessarily modify the adhesion now given, and understanding that is not intended to do so, and the committee recommend that further proceedings in the matter be dropped."

H

MINUTES OF COMMITTEE APPOINTED TO CONFER WITH MR. D. J. MACDONNELL.

KNOX CHURCH VESTRY, 25th April, 1876

At 2 o'clock P.M., the Committee appointed to confer with Rev. D. J. Macdonnell met, and was constituted with prayer by Mr. King.

Sederunt,—Revs. Prof. McLaren, Convener, in the chair; Drs. Topp and Principal Caven, King, Mitchell, Reid, Carmichael, Robb, with Messrs J. McMurrich, James Brown and Wm. Mitchell.

The Convener reported that he had notified all the members of the meeting, and that he had written to Mr. Macdonnell, requesting his presence.

The Committee after waiting for about one hour without the appearance of Mr. Macdonnell, or any word from him, adjourned to meet again at the call of the Convener.

Extracted from minutes of Committee's proceedings by

J. GARDNER ROBB, *Secretary*.

KNOX CHURCH VESTRY, 27th April, 1876.

At 2 o'clock P. M., Committee appointed to confer with Rev. D. J. Macdonnell met, and was constituted with prayer by Principal Caven, D.D.

Sederunt,—Revs. Prof. McLaren, Convener, in the chair; Drs. Topp and Principal Caven, King Mitchell, Robb, with Messrs. Brown and Mitchell, elders.

The Convener intimated that he had called the Commiitee together in consequence of a letter and enclosed statement received from Mr. Macdonnell. Mr. Macdonnell's letter explain-

ed that no communication had reached the committee from him on the 25th inst., owing to the mistake of his messenger in taking his communication to Knox College instead of Knox Church.

The Committee proceeded to the consideration of the further statement now forwarded by Mr. Macdonnell,

Whereupon it was moved by Mr. King, seconded by Mr. D. Mitchell, and agreed to, That the Convener, with Principal Caven, and Mr. King, be appointed a sub-committee to draw up a report, dealing with the statement of Mr. Macdonnell, and embodying such recommendations in connection therewith as may be considered necessary.

The Committee adjourned to meet again on Monday, the 1st May, at 10 o'clock A.M.

The Convener dismissed with benediction.

Extracted from minutes of Committee's proceedings by

J. GARDNER ROBB, *Secretary.*

KNOX CHURCH, VESTRY, 1st May, 1876.

Committee in this case again met, and was constituted by Convener.

Sederunt,—Revs. Prof. McLaren, Convener, in the chair; Drs. Topp and Reid, King, Mitchell and Robb, with Messieurs Hon. J. McMurrich, James Brown and Wm. Mitchell.

Convener submitted report of sub-committee, whereupon it was agreed to ask Mr. Macdonnell to answer the question proposed by sub-committee in their report, or to give in his own words a statement equivalent thereto.

Committee adjourned to meet at 9 o'clock same evening, and was dismissed with benediction.

Extracted from minutes of Committee's proceedings by

J. GARDNER ROBB, *Secretary.*

KNOX CHURCH VESTRY, 1st May, 1876.

At 9:30 o'clock P.M., Committee in this case again met, and was constituted with prayer by Rev. Wm. Reid D. D.

Sederunt,—Revs. Prof. McLaren, Convener in the chair; Drs. Topp and Reid, King and Robb, with Messrs. Hon. J. McMurrich, Jas. Brown and Wm. Mitchell.

Letter from Rev. D. J. Macdonnell, with another statement enclosed, were read.

Moved by Mr. King, seconded by Mr. James Brown, and agreed to, That Dr. Topp be requested to call with Mr. Wm. Mitchell on Mr. Macdonnell, state to him clearly the Committee's objections to his statement, and press upon him the desirability of his giving a categorical answer to the Committee's question, or making a statement of his own equivalent thereto; and that the Committee adjourn to meet again to-morrow morning at 9 o'clock A.M.

Committee dismissed with benediction.

Extracted from minutes of Committee's proceedings by

J. GARDNER ROBB, *Secretary.*

KNOX CHURCH VESTRY, 2nd May, 1876.

At 9 A.M., the Committee appointed to confer with Rev. D. J. Macdonnell met, and was constituted by the Convener.

Sederunt,—Revs. Prof. McLaren, Convener, in the chair; r. Topp, Reid and Principal Caven, King, Robb, Mitchell, armichael, with Messrs. Hon. J. McMurrich, James Brown, nd Wm. Mitchell, elders.

The Convener received and read a letter from Mr. Macdonell, declining an interview and enclosing another statement.

In regard to said statement the Committee agreed to request Mr. Macdonnell's personal attendance for the purpose of receiving explanations of part of it, and of obtaining the withdrawal of the last clause.

Mr. Wm. Mitchell left to request Mr. Macdonnell's attendance. On his return Mr. Mitchell reported that Mr. Macdonnell respectfully declined to appear before the Committee, as in his present state of mind he did not think his appearance would result in any good; and that Mr. Macdonnell desired to withdraw all his previous statements in favour of the last. Report to Presbytery was then drawn up. Moved by Mr. King, seconded by Mr. Brown, That the report as read by the Convener be adopted and forwarded to Presbytery.

Moved by Mr. D. Mitchell, seconded by Mr. Wm. Mitchell, That the statement from Rev. D. J. Macdonnell herewith submitted be considered satisfactory, in as much as it does not necessarily modify the adhesion now given, and understanding that it is not intended to do so, and the Committee recommend that further proceedings in the matter be dropped. On division two voted for amendment, and five for motion. Messrs. D. and W. Mitchell asked and obtained leave to enter their dissent from this finding.

Extracted from minutes of Committee's proceedings by

J. GARDNER ROBB, *Secretary*.

SECOND STATEMENT OF MR. MACDONNELL.

To the Moderator and Members of the Presbytery of Toronto.

FATHERS AND BRETHERN,—Inasmuch as it has been indicated that my position may still be misunderstood, notwithstanding the explanations given before the Presbytery, and being desirous to have no construction put on my words other than they were intended to bear, I have thrown my statement into another form, which I desire to substitute for the previous one.

The doctrine of the eternity of punishment is still to my mind involved in great difficulties, arising partly from certain texts of Scripture, the most obvious interpretation of which seems to be that sin shall at some time or other close, and partly from general considerations of the character of God, as revealed, of His infinite righteousness, in all His moral creatures; His infinite wisdom, whose plans cannot be baffled; His mercy, which endureth forever,—considerations which, taken by themselves, would form a ground for hope that God would find out some way of putting an end to sin and suffering.

On the other hand there is one way of deliverance, and one only, pointed out, and concerning those who reject this way there are awfully severe statements, especially from the lips of Christ Himself, which seem to shut the door of hope, and which lead me to say that I do not consider it a part of my message as a Minister of the Gospel, to hold out the hope of future pardon, to those who deliberately reject Christ.

I have arrived at no conclusion at variance with the doctrine of the church. I do not conceal that I have some doubt whether the Church is absolutely correct in her interpretation of the statements of Scripture referred to; but I admit that they point with almost irresistible force in the direction of the endless punishment of the wicked. I have no intention of making this doubt a part of my preaching.

Having made these statements, I have no difficulty in de-

claring my adhesion to the teachings of the Confession of Faith on this point, the more especially as the language used is almost entirely borrowed from Scripture.

I am, yours respectfully,

D. J. MACDONNELL

THIRD STATEMENT OF MR. MACDONNELL.

To the Moderator and Members of the Presbytery of Toronto.

FATHERS AND BRETHREN,—Inasmuch as it has been indicated that my position may still be misunderstood, I have thrown my statement into another form, which I desire to substitute for the previous one.

In regard to the eternity of future punishment, I have arrived at no conclusion at variance with the doctrine of the Church. I do not conceal that I have some doubt whether the Church is absolutely correct in her interpretation of certain passages of Scripture, which, nevertheless I admit, point with almost irresistible force in the direction of the endless punishment of the wicked. I have no intention of making this doubt a part of my preaching.

Having made this statement, I have no difficulty in declaring my adhesion to the teaching of the Confession of Faith on this point, the more especially as the language used is almost entirely borrowed from Scripture.

I am, Fathers and Brethren,

Yours respectfully,

D. J. MACDONNELL.

ST. ANDREW'S MANSE, 1st May, 1876.

To Rev. Prof. McLaren, Convenor of Committee.

REV. AND DEAR SIR.—I have carefully considered the draft report of the Committee and the objections to my abbreviated statement communicated to me by yourself.

I withdraw the first paragraph of the said statement, inasmuch as it is held to compromise the Presbytery by virtually re-capitulating a statement which they have pronounced unsatisfactory. This preamble is not essential, and I do not wish to throw needless obstacles in the way of a harmonious adjustment of the matter.

The remaining paragraphs (the word "absolutely" being omitted, if the Committee deem it objectionable) express my state of mind on the subject more exactly than the words used under paragraph "(d)' in the Committee's draft report. I may state that they were written after I had seen a memorandum kindly drawn up by Principal Caven, containing the following expressions, to which they are in my opinion, almost equivalent.

I have arrived at no conclusion on the subject of Future Punishment at variance with the doctrines of the church, the evidence in support of this doctrine seems too strong to be set aside. I confess, however, to the existance in my mind of difficulties in connection with this subject, which I have not been able to remove.

I am obliged to close in haste. I have been very busy all afternoon with my intending communicants.

Yours faithfully,

D. J. MACDONNELL.

PROPOSED STATEMENT.

In regard to the eternity of future punishment, I have arrived at no conclusion at variance with the Church. I do not conceal that I have some doubt whether theChurch is(absolutely)correct in her interpretation of certain passages of Scripture, which,nevertheless, I admit, point with almost irresistable force in the direction of the endless punishment of the wicked. I have no intention of making this doubt a part of my preaching.

Hauing made this statement, I have no difficulty in declaring my adhesion to the teaching of the Confession of Faith on this point, the more especially as the language used is almost entirely borrowed from Scripture.

J (1)

THE REPORT OF THE SERMON.

As the case under consideration arose from the published report of a sermon preached by Rev. Mr. Macdonnell on the 26th September, we publish the text for the information of our readers:—

The text was taken from Romans v., from the 12th verse to the end of the Chapter.

He began by expounding the passage at some length. The turning point of it was the representation in the 14th verse of Adam as the type of the coming one, Jesus Christ. In the 12th and 21st verses, which were antitheses, the points were stated that as the sin of Adam brought death upon all men, so the righteousness of Christ brought eternal life to all men, and in the 15th, 16th, and 17th verses there was a contrast stated to show that the free gift by Christ was greater beyond all comparison than the transgression by Adam. Some points were quite clear—first, that sin is unalterably linked with death, righteousness with life. There were the five words—sin, death, grace, righteousness, life. Sin and death, the two evil powers, on the one side; righteousness and life, the two grand results of God's grace, on the other side, and God's grace between abolishing sin and death, and bringing forth righteousness and life. The favour of God could only rest on the righteous. So, if you would be blessed on earth, living as a man morally and spiritually in the image of God, you must be righteous; and the righteousness of no other being, and of no myriads of beings, would do you a particle of good if you are not righteous yourself. In regard to death, sin and righteousness, the human race is an organic whole, not a mass of isolated units and the whole body feels the power of the sinful head or the power of the righteous head. Sin is traced to its source in Adam, our natural head; righteousness is traced to its source in Christ, our spiritual head. When you come to explain how we get our sin from Adam and our righteousness from Christ, you come to the human interpretations of the Divine record, which often lead us into great perplexity. The Pelagian theory that every child is born into the world perfect but falls through bad example set it by its parents, as Adam from the beginning set a bad example; the Augustine theory, that the act of Adam was the act of mankind, the whole race being contained in him as the germ; the Federal theory, that there was a covenant between God and Adam, that the latter should stand as a moral probation on behalf of the race, and his obedience or disobedience should be imputed to his descendants; or the Arminian theory, that there being an organic unity of the race, corruption of the nature of man has been entailed upon the descendants of Adam by Adam's sin, which, however is rather to be called an original misfortune than an original sin, for which God in Christ has provided an abundant remedy—he did not consider as reasonable as that of the Westminster Confession of Faith, which was a kind of combination of the Augustinian view and the Federal theory. After quoting the Confession on the subject, the

speaker went on to say:—"This is a human account of the matter—it is not Gospel truth. It is as good an account as any philosopher that I have ever read anything of can yet give—for this is a matter for the philosopher as well as for the theologian. It is not started by the Bible; it is started by man's conscience. There is the fact staring you in the face that men are sinners. If there were no Bible you would still see that such is the case. Observe, it is not a bare legal imputation of Adam's sin to men who had no share in it. That we could not believe—it would be unjust. It is an imputation of sin to men who share the nature of Adam. The poison that is in the root comes out inevitably in the leaf—the mud that is in the fountain head mingles with the stream as it rolls onward. I think that is the intelligent view, and I don't think it conflicts with God's righteousness. I say death passed upon all, because all sinned. There never has been a man yet that did not sin, and so with regard to Christ, the righteous head, there is no bare imputation of His righteousness to men who have no share in it; but there is an imputation to men who live in Christ as the branch in the vine. All His fullness overflows into them; every part of His righteousness becomes theirs. For good or for evil the race is one organic whole. The stream of sin has flowed uninterruptedly from the one fountain, Adam; the stream of righteousness flows perennially from the one fountain, Jesus Christ. As the whole race suffered through Adam's sin, so the whole race shall be benefitted by Christ's righteousness. That is what these phrases seem to say, and this question at once occurs, Does this passage teach universal salvation—salvation of men without exception? Is that what the words mean? It is what they seem to mean. The passage seems to say, as clearly as human language can say it, that the justification is co-extensive with the judgment; that the sanctification is co-extensive with the sin. And it seems to say that there will be a mighty preponderance of the good secured by Christ over the evil inherited from Adam. Just read the 18th verse; when you say that 'judgment' came upon all men to condemnation, you don't except anybody; and when Paul says, 'Righteousness came upon all men to sanctification,' why should you except any? I state the question boldly, for this is the question we have to face; and I just simply did't preach on these verses two or three Sunday's ago, because I didn't know exactly what to say on the point. Plain men reading these words without any theology in their heads, and without any preconceived notions, will say that it means that all men who became sinners through Adam, are to be made holy through Christ; candidly, that it is what it does mean. I reiterate that there is to be a mighty preponderance of good over evil; for if through the one transgression by one the many died, much more shall the gift of the grace of God abound to the many. Where sin multiplied, grace did much more abound. Are these statements consistent with the cherished views about the saved and the lost respectively, about the eternal blessedness of the saved and the eternal misery of the lost?" He quoted the opinion of the Rev. Dr. Hodge, that the saved would be infinitely more numerous than the lost, and asked, 'How does Dr. Hodge get that fact? With the expectation that there will be in the future a time when men will be nearly all righteous, when the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth. That is one assump-

tion, and the other is that all who die in infancy will be saved. This is a sad way of bringing in the promise. Does it not lead us to cry out, 'Oh, that all the wicked had died in infancy!' We see men going down to death, dying as drunkards and licentious libertines. Oh that these men had died in their mother's arms! And then the terrible question comes, How do you know that all infants are saved? The Word of God does not say it any more than it says that all men will be saved. Now we must face this question fairly, as men who believe in Scripture, in God, in righteousness and in love." After referring to the question of baptism, and expressing his belief that baptism had nothing to do with the salvation of infants, remarking that the idea was too monstrous for him to entertain for a moment that God would condemn any human being to eternal infamy for the want of a few drops of water on its forehead. He proceeded, "I believe that all infants will be saved—not because I find it in the Scripture, for I don't, but just because it seems to be in accordance with God's love and God's grace, and with what Jesus Christ said about little children coming to him. It is not because children are not sinners; we know they are. Here is the question :—Can God, through all eternity, look complacently upon not only the misery but the sin of the lost? I heard a good man say not long ago—speaking of this very matter—of how it would effect the redeemed in Heaven to know that there are thousands of men suffering in hell—that we, who are going about our ordinary occupations in this city, do not have our happiness interfered with because we know that there is a certain number of persons in prison. No! and why not? Because we have not enough of the love of God in our hearts. But how about God? We may forget, and eat and drink, and be merry, while there are souls there pining in wretchedness. But how about God? You talk about prison walls that will shut in men's spirit from the Father of Spirits? Ah, no, and there is a kind father whose son is languishing in the Central Prison! He does not forget—while we are all forgetful—that his boy will have to be there for months and years, before he will get into the sunshine again. Can the Father of Spirits, think you, forget His poor lost ones who are gnashing their teeth in hell? Is sin stronger than God? Is the devil stronger than God? Is evil co-existent and co-eternal with the good? These are the questions. I don't say no to them, and I won't say yes, because if that is the case you see you have two Gods, and the evil God is just as the good God. No, I am just stating to you my difficulties about this matter of the eternity, not of punishment, merely, but of sin—my difficulty of understanding how the Omnipotent, all loving, all gracious God, can make beings who are to sin against Him to eternity, and whom he cannot conquer; that these men must go on, stronger than God, rebelling against God, and never able to be subdued by His power. Is that the teaching of Scripture? If so, I will accept it—little as I can understand it—I was going to say believe it. I have said it here before, and I say it again, there are some statements in scripture that seem to me almost to shut out the belief of anything but eternal misery—eternal punishment. Now, let me read a few passages—not with a view of explaining them, but with a view of having you christian people taking them home and thinking about them and finding out what you believe.

Matt. xii, 32.—And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him, but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.

Matt. xxv, 46.—And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life everlasting.

Mark ix, 43.—And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off; it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two hands to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched.

"While that is figurative language, the word 'never' is not figurative.

II. Thess. i, 9.—Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.

"'Everlasting destruction!' They are awful words, whatever they mean!

I. John v, 16.—If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death, I do not say that he shall pray for it.

"Just like the unforgivable sin again! There seems to be a line beyond which if men pass, even their brethren should not pray for them. Why, this is terrible!

Jude 6.—And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, He hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.

"Well, that doesn't refer to men, but to angels; and if punishment may be eternal in one case, it may be in the other. These are the strongest passages I know on that side. Let us see some on the other side; for I say that the teaching of Scripture is not clear and unmistakable on this point. It is not such as to give any one the right to say dogmatically—'This is true, and that is false.' In Romans xi., after a long argument about the Jews and the Gentiles, and about how the fall of the Jews was for the good of the Gentiles, and about how the gathering in of the Gentiles was to be for the good of the Jews, and all Israel was to be saved, we read (32nd verse), 'For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that He may have mercy upon all'—the mercy is as wide as the belief. This is the natural interpretation of these words:—

I. Cor. xv, 22.—For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

25th verse.—For He must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet, the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.

28th verse.—And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subjected unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.

'Who could read these words if he had not those other pass-

ages about eternal punishment and fire, and the gnawing worm, without thinking that by-and-bye the time will come (as the Scriptures plainly teach there will be such a time) when all things will be put under Jesus Christ, when He will have put all enemies under His feet—all rule, and authority, and all power that are against Him? Does that mean shutting them up in hell to sin and disobey for ever and ever? What does 'conquering enemies' mean with Christ if not transforming them into friends?

Phil. ii., 9, 10.—Wherefore God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth.

"Well, unless there is a great qualification elsewhere in Scripture, there is coming a time when latterly every knee in the Universe (you see how strong the statement is—on earth, over the earth, and under the earth, that is, in hell) shall bow and acknowledge Christ as Lord. In Hebrews ii. 9, it is written that 'He by the grace of God should taste death for every man.' I would not be inclined, however, to press that.

Ephesians i, 10.—That in the dispensation of the fulness of things He might gather together in one all things in Christ both which are in heaven and which in earth, even in Him.

And in the similar passage in Colossians i. 19, 20.—For it pleased the Father that in Him shall fulness dwell, and, having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself, by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven.

"Now, I have read half a dozen passages on one side and half a dozen on the other, and I repeat that the teaching of the Scripture is not so clear as the majority of good men and of good women have thought, and as it is stated to be by the Confession of Faith of our own Church. I do not say that the Confessions of Faith of any other Church are wrong or not; but I do say that this ought not to be made a matter of faith on the part of Christian people, but should be left an open question for further investigation. For if you ask me to accept these statements about the fire and the worm, I must ask you to accept the other, which says that 'as in the old Adam all died, so in the new Adam shall all be made alive.' There must be a time when that victory will be accomplished, and when every knee will bow in humble submission to Christ. I sympathize intensely with those words of Tennyson;—

Oh, yet we trust that somehow good
  Will be the final goal of ill,
  To pangs of nature, sins of will,
Defects of doubt and taints of blood.
That nothing walks with aimless feet,
  That not one life shall be destroy'd,
  Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God hath made the pile complete.
That not a worm is cloven in vain,
  That not a moth with vain desire,
  Is shrivelled in a fruitless fire,
Or but subserves another's gain.
Behold, we know not anything,
  I can but trust that good shall fall

At last—far off—at last to all,
And every winter change to spring.
So runs my dream, but what am I?
An infant crying in the night,
And infant crying for the light,
And with no language but a cry.
The wish, that of the living whole
No life may fail beyond the grave,
Derives it not from what we have
The likest God within the soul?
Are God and Nature then at strife,
That Nature lends such evil dreams?
So careful of the type she seems,
So careless of the single life.
That I, considering everywhere
Her secret meaning in her deeds,
And finding that of fifty seeds
She often brings but one to bear.
I falter where I firmly trod,
And falling with my weight of cares
Upon the great world's altar stairs
That slope thro' darkness up to God.
I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope,
And gather dust and chaff, and call
To what I feel is Lord of all,
And faintly trust the larger hope.

"These lines of Tennyson come home to many a poor soul, as if there was a sweet consolation in them, and it says, 'Oh, if that only were God's truth!' and I say 'Amen' to that. I think the Christian Church, instead of putting into its Confessions of Faith that there is to be eternal punishment for the majority of the human race, would be wiser to sit down in a devout posture and study Romans and Ephesians and Colossians. Oh, that a greater Augustine would arise, and show how these apparently conflicting passages can be reconciled! I know that there have been good men who, when they considered these things, could see nothing but a great darkness about the face of God. 'But, oh,' you say, 'this is dangerous.' I cannot help that—if it is true it is not dangerous. 'But it is not in the Confession of Faith.' I do not care; I am not bound by the Confession of Faith when it conflicts with the Bible, as you know. The question is, What is the truth of God? Let us get that and live and die on it. But do not let us be too ready to dogmatize ourselves, or to accept the dogmatism of others as to what is the truth, no matter whether it has come down from the Greek fathers, or the Roman fathers, or the Catholic Church, or the Protestant Church. What we have to do with is the Word of God. Let us make it our daily counsellor, that we may begin to fathom the depths in it which have never been fathomed. I cannot help speaking with some degree of excitement on this subject, for I can imagine that a man could go up and down the length and breadth of the earth declaring to men that it is God's truth, that God must save every man before the pile will be complete. 'But,' you say, 'it would keep men in sin.' Not at all, Crime was far more rampant when the laws were severe than now, when the gentle laws of love are in force, for love will never make man go wrong. It is not dangerous; for observe, I have no sympathy, and I hope none of you

have, with a kind of universalism which is a good deal preached now—that which abolishes the distinction between sin and righteousness. If there is universal salvation taught in the Bible, it is not that a man can go on sinning all his life. The question is not, is there a hell—for there is; it is not about punishment, but about the eternity of it. It is not the question of suffering for our sins beyond the grave, for we shall suffer just as surely as we go to bed to-night. But there is nothing dangerous in telling poor sinners that men will have a chance to gain life beyond the grave. Otherwise, how could Christ be said to have 'preached to the spirits in prison which sometimes were disobedient.' I do not think there is any danger if only you remember the cardinal principle with which this passage agrees, that sin reigns unto death, that only through righteousness can grace reign into eternal life. May God purify our hearts, and make us honest, and keep us from turning the Scripture simply to meet our own views, but let us patiently thoughtfully, read these wonderful passages that I have read. And it seems to me that if Paul could say with such a triumphant zest that where sin abounded grace did much more abound, so it seems to me that there are more astonishing passages, and passages more full of glorious truth, that declare that at some time or other the death, spiritual and carnal, shall be eternally done away; that all enemies shall be subdued to Christ, and 'every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that He is Lord, to the glory of God the Father, and God shall be all in all.'"

J (2)

The moderator expressed a similar desire, and called upon Mr Macdonnell to make any explanation in regard to the sermon in question if he desired to do so.

Rev. Mr. Macdonnell then addressed the Presbytery. He said:—I need hardly say that the matter which brings us here to-day has caused me much and anxious thought. I wish to say at the outset that, whatever the result of your deliberations may be, I have no fear that these deliberations will be carried on in any other than a spirit of brotherly kindness. I shall be the last to raise the cry of unreasonable interference—the readiest to admit that the claims of truth are vastly more important than any personal considerations. I have no desire to deviate needlessly from the current teaching of the Church. Nor do I wish to have any deviation exaggerated or intensified. I feel it to be necessary to guard against being drawn by the sympathy of those who approve of my utterances, or driven by the opposition of those who denounce them, to take a position which I would not otherwise have taken. Moreover, while willing to stand or fall by my real opinions, I do not wish to be held responsible for more than I have actually advanced. I trust I can honestly say that I am willing to be guided by "the Spirit of Truth," who has been promised to guide us into all the truth; and, further, that I am ready to listen to the counsels of truth-loving men who are older and wiser than myself. While the report which appeared in the *Witness* and the *Mail* is, in the main, correct, it is only fair to myself to state that

there are some omissions and some alterations (unintentional, no doubt,) the general effect of which is to lead to the supposition that I declared my acceptance of the doctrine of the final restoration of all, and denied the eternity of future punishment, whereas I simply stated the difficulty I had in arriving at any conclusion, inasmuch as the teaching of Scripture appeared to be conflicting. It is difficult to make verbal corrections, inasmuch as the latter portion of the discourse was not written. On two or three points I can speak with certainty, though one who speaks rapidly and extemporaneously must always be ready to admit that he may not have said precisely what he intended to say. *E. g.*, one of the strongest statements I made was after quoting Matt. xxv., 46 to the effect that I could hardly see how this passage could be reconciled with any view limiting the eternity of punishment—that these words of Jesus seemed to me the strongest in the Bible on that subject. Again in the sentence, "Who could read these words * * * without thinking that by-and-by the time will come (as the Scriptures plainly teach there will be such a time) when all things shall be put under Jesus Christ," &c., the parenthetical clause ought to read thus: "As the Scriptures seem plainly to teach." Again, in referring to the Confession of Faith, I used the following words, which do not appear in the report: "I do not say that the teaching of the Confession of Faith on this subject is unscriptural." I do not think that the following sentence in the report represents at all fairly the spirit of what was actually said. "I think the Christian Church, instead of putting into its Confessions of Faith that there is to be eternal punishment for the majority of the human race, would be wiser to sit down in a devout posture and study Romans, and Ephesians, and Colossians." If I did use such language I regret it; and I may add that there are a few other expressions—especially one regarding my relation to the Confession of Faith—which I acknowledge to have been unwise and improper, and which, but for the excitement of the moment, would have been uttered, if at all, in a different tone. I have the greatest confidence in making the above corrections and explanations, inasmuch as several persons who heard the sermon, and who did not at all sympathize with my difficulties, have volunteered statements which confirm my own recollection. Of this I am quite sure, that again and again I was careful to guard myself against the positive assertion of the universality of salvation. While I do not complain of being misreported to any great extent, I do regret that the sermon was reported at all. I am in no sense responsible for its publication either in the *Witness* or in the *Mail*. It is one thing to speak out of the fullness of the heart to one's own people, who hear other portions of one's teaching and can view the questionable in the light of the unquestionable, and quite another thing to send one detached sermon, and that on a difficult subject, broadcast over the land. I was not in any way consulted as to the publication of the sermon, and it is only fair to myself to state that had I had any intention of publishing it, it would have appeared in a different shape. There are expressions made use of which I do not like, and which I would not have preserved. Sermons prepared at the feverish rate of two per week are not usually fit for publication. Of course, while disowning all responsibility for the publishing of the sermon, I freely admit that the Presbytery has a perfect right to

deal with me for preaching it—nay, may even be under obligation to do so. It may not be amiss to state that the circumstances under which the lecture was delivered. I did not go out of my way to seek a passage on which to preach the view set forth. I had been engaged for some Sundays in expounding the Epistle to the Romans. This passage in the 5th chapter should have formed the subject of discourse on the 29th August, but I have found so great difficulty in giving a satisfactory interpretation, that, after spending a good deal of time in reading, &c., I gave up the subject and fell back upon another which was less difficult. On 26th September, after an interval of an absence from home, I preached the discourse now under consideration, having made the best preparations I was able in the time to make. I need not enter into the difficulties which the passage presented to my mind, further than to say that it was not merely the use of the expression "all" and "the many" in parallel clauses that impressed me, but the triumphant tone of the statements concerning the abounding of grace over sin. I was led to put together and to weigh against each other two sets of passages in scripture—the one set appearing to teach the eternity of punishment, and the other appearing to teach that there would come a time when alienation from God and rebellion against Him should cease, when all things should be reconciled, when God should be all in all, and when consequently punishment should come to an end. I did not deny the eternity of punishment, but expressed doubts as to its eternity—doubts based partly on grounds of reason, and partly on Scripture. I did not say that the teaching of the Confession of Faith was unscriptural on this point, but that there were passages of scripture which I found it hard to reconcile with the statements of the Confession, and to which sufficient weight had not, in my judgment, been allowed. I expressed the wish that the doctrine of the final salvation of all might be true—quoting the words of Tennyson—and I indicated that the passage quoted from the writings of St. Paul appeared to favour that doctrine. At the same time I urged just as strongly the force of the expressions in which, apparently, the eternity of punishment is set forth. The general conclusion which I drew, therefore, was that the teaching of scripture was not clear and decisive on this point, and that it was one on which further study and investigation might throw light. I feel disposed to ask members of Presbytery what I should have done under these circumstances. Here was a difficult passage—one of acknowledged difficulty—which met me in the regular course of exposition. What was I to do with it? Pass it over? or give a superficial explanation that left the difficulty exactly where it was? or make the best I could of it after honest and prayerful study? The last course was the one that I adopted, and one which still commends itself to my sense of right. It may be said that it was not right to speak on such an important matter in a way opposed to the general teachings of the Church when my own mind was in a state of uncertainty and perplexity. That view would carry more weight with me if I held that a minister is at liberty to say nothing from the pulpit except that on which no doubt can possibly be entertained. I have been accustomed, however, to hold that I was doing my people's real service in leading them to think for themselves, and it has been my habit to state difficulties frankly, often without even

attempting to solve them. Moreover, I found that some of the best commentators, such as Tholuck, Lange, and Olshausen, who have done noble service to the cause of Bible truth, and who are looked upon as safe guides in the interpretation of Scipture, favour more or less distinctly the view of restoration. One does not feel that in such company he can be so very far astray. I urge this point, not to establish the correctness of the view, but simply to show that in following men who are the leaders of evangelical thought in Germany, one does not necessarily exhibit any lack of modesty. To the names already quoted may be added that of Baldwin Brown, one of the best preachers and writers among English Nonconformists. These names are of consequence as indicating that men who stand high in the Evangelical Churches are upholders of the view suggested. It is less and less the case that the Christan people receive with unqualified assent all that is taught from the pulpit. They are accustomed to weigh and discuss every opinion advanced. There is all the more reason, therefore, why a minister should take them into his confidence. At the same time I have been almost forced, by the opinions of many whose judgment is better than mine, to the conclusion that it was unwise to speak as I did on this particular subject when my own mind was in a state of perplexity. At the best there is little ground in Scripture for the hope, and I feel more and more the force of the argument that we ought not to try to make the matter clearer than God has chosen to make it in his word. But it may be said, Is not the teaching of the Confession of Faith explicit enough, and is not that the standard by which the preaching of a Presbyterian minister is to be tested? Inasmuch as accusations of dishonesty have been made against me in various quarters, on account of real or supposed deviations from the Confession of Faith, I am not sorry to have the opportunity of stating before this Presbytery what I think about my own relation and that of other ministers to this document. I think most men will admit that, were we now for the first time framing a Confession which was to be the test of office in the Church, the result would be a document containing fewer propositions than the Westminster Confession, and leaving more room for difference of opinion. The tendency of Christian thought now-a-days is to regard fewer and fewer articles as essential, and so to make it possible to embrace within one Church a larger body of believing men. Most men will likewise admit that the Church has the right to revise and amend her Confession from time to time. It might have been better for the Presbyterian Church had there been a periodical revision and curtailing of the Confession. One may be ready to assent to all that the Confession contains, and yet may not accept all its propositions as matters of faith necessary to be believed in order to the holding of office in the Church. Reverence for the Westminster Confession on account of its antiquity as well as on account of its undoubted excellence has stood and does stand in the way of any attempt at revision. Besides, it is felt that it would be a pity for any one section of the Presbyterian Church to act alone in this matter. If it is difficult for a Church to move in the direction of change, still more difficult is it for an individual. The only plan then left open to him is to qualify the terms of his assent to the Confession. This is what I did. The words of the question put to Candidates for or-

dination in the P. C. of Canada, Church of Scotland, at the time of my induction, appeared to me so stringent that I declined to answer without qualification in the affirmative. The Presbytery, after full deliberation, accepted the qualified answer. The year following the question was altered, and the terms of adherence were made much more reasonable, very much to the satisfaction of a large number of those concerned. I mention these facts by way of answering the charge of dishonesty which has been hastily put forward. I have been at pains not only to be, but also to appear honest in my subscription to the Confession. I do not understand, however, that other men have not precisely the same freedom I have. The very use of the term "subordinate" in the basis of union indicates that there is an appeal to a higher standard, which is supreme and final. What is the meaning of calling the Scriptures "the only infallible rule," &c." if one is not at liberty to appeal to them? The Confession of Faith, moreover, itself sanctions the appeal. At chapter, 1, section 10, it says :—"The Supreme Judge by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of Councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men and private spirits are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture." At chapter 31, section 4, it is said "All Synods or Councils since the Apostles' time may err, and many have erred; they are not, therefore, to be made the rule of faith or practice, but to be used as a help in both." In what sense, then, are we bound by the Confession? Not, surely, in the sense that we are tied down to every proposition that it contains; but that we accept in its grand features the system of doctrine therein set forth. Every deviation must be judged on its own merits. The Church must decide in each case whether the error is fundamental or not. It is a shallow view which is sometimes presented, that if you are not satisfied with a particular Church or "denomination," you are free to walk out and join another. This is not the view of the Church given in the New Testament. Nor is it the view taken by the Confession of Faith. The Presbyterian Church is not an organization for the maintenance of the Westminster Confession, but an organization for the worship of God and for the spread of the truth. It has no right to make the terms of admission to the ministerial office narrower than Christ has made them. To define the limits within which tolerance should be exercised, is almost an impossibility, and the matter must be left to the discernment of the Church courts. When I was inducted I promised to submit in the spirit of meekness to the admonitions of the brethren of the Presbytery, and to be subject to them. This promise I am willing to fulfil to you, their successors. I leave the matter in your hands. I have no desire to disturb the peace of the Church. I have no desire for freedom to propagate error. I do desire freedom to investigate the truth. That freedom I seek for my brethren as well as myself. I seek it in the real interest of the Presbyterian Church—in the interest of the cause of Christ.

Professor McLaren asked what was the nature of the qualification which Mr. Macdonnell gave.

Rev. Mr. Macdonnell replied that his answer was "Yes, with the qualification expressed in the Confession of Faith itself, chap. 31, sec. 4."